

Madison Police Department

Public Service Announcement

This is a public safety advisement to all citizens in the City of Madison from Chief Daniel J. Busken and all members of the Madison Police Department.

WHAT TO DO DURING TRAFFIC STOPS

When pulled over by the Police, what should I do?

There are many laws and regulations in place to help ensure that Madison's roads and highways are safe places to travel. Enforcement of these laws can be stressful for both motorist and police officers alike. This advisement is designed to provide you, the citizen, with insight on how to make your experience with a traffic stop as stress free as possible.

After stopping, unless directed by the officer to get out of your car, please wait in your car for the officer to approach. *Please keep your hands on the steering wheel and do not make any sudden movements or reach into your glove compartment.* The officer will ask for your driver's license and proof of liability insurance. If you have a weapon in the car this is the time to calmly tell the officer that you have one and where it is. **Please do not reach for it!** The officer will explain why you were stopped. This is not the time to contest the stop or a citation if one is later issued.

The Madison Police Department uses both marked (the standard white with blue and gold striping) and unmarked cars for patrol duties. All our marked units are equipped with overhead lights, stripes and sirens. All of our unmarked units are equipped with lights in the grill / windshield, back window and tail-lights.

“What If I am Being Pulled Over by an Unmarked Car”?

Unfortunately, the reality is that there are occasional cases of police impersonators pulling over motorists. Since Madison is in a metropolitan area there are a variety of law enforcement agencies either working on our streets and highways, namely the sheriff's office and highway patrol, or on their way to another destination.

Our unmarked units, which are in a variety of makes and models, are equipped with flashing lights in the front grill, visor, or windshields and have sirens. The unit may or may not have a spotlight.

If you are being stopped by what appears to be an unmarked car acknowledge the officer by turning on your four-way hazard flashers and driving to the nearest well-lit area at a reduced speed. If the officer is not in uniform lock your door and roll your window down about an inch. Ask the officer to identify him / herself with his or her badge and ID Card. If you do not believe the “officer” ask him to call for a marked police vehicle so you can verify he or she is the police. Officers are required to “call in” all vehicle stops to dispatch. You can also call the Police Department Dispatch on your cell phone either by using (9-1-1 or 256-722-7190) to verify you have been stopped by an officer.

“I am afraid to be stopped at night”.

Being stopped at night – particularly along a dark stretch of road – can heighten the tension for both a motorist and an officer alike. Officers do not object to drivers proceeding to the nearest well – lit area. Simply acknowledge the officer by turning on your four – way hazard flashers and driving at a reduced speed to the nearest well lit place.

“What If I Disagree with the Officer and / or the Citation”?

If you disagree with the Officer or a citation, the time of the stop is not the time to argue or contest either the stop or a charge. Upon request, if the officer has not done so already, the officer will identify him or herself to you. If the officer’s explanation of the stop or citation is not satisfactory you may contact an on duty supervisor through police dispatch at 256-722-7190 or go to the Madison Police Department located at 100 Hughes Rd, Madison, Alabama and request to see an on duty supervisor. If you feel the citation is incorrect you have the opportunity to contest the charge in Municipal Court before a judge. You are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and the burden of proof is on the city.

“What if the officer asks me to get out of my car”?

If asked to step out of your car please do so without argument. Walk to the back of your car on the side away from traffic or as directed by the officer.

Safety Tips to Remember:

- Turn off the ignition.
- Turn on your interior light if the stop occurs at night.
- Place your hands on the steering wheel until the officer can make a safety evaluation as he / she approaches your car.
- Avoid making any sudden or reaching movements.

- Please stay in your vehicle unless asked by the officer to get out.
- If you are carrying a weapon, advise the officer but do not reach for or touch the weapon.
- Always follow the officer's instructions.

Please do not argue with the officer. This may only increase the tension in an already stressful situation.